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ON CERTAIN ROMAN CHARACTERISTICS¹

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It is a great misfortune that our intimate knowledge of the personality of ancient peoples is so nearly confined to that of two races only, the Hellenic and the Italic, or, as we commonly call them, the Greek and the Roman. Our acquaintance with the Egyptians, with certain of the Eastern races—even with the Kelts, who were perhaps the nearest kin of the Romans—has, to be sure, advanced remarkably during the last century, and especially during the last quarter of a century or so, and we may confidently look forward to much new light in this direction in the future. But the absence among them, for the most part, of what we call literature—the verbal recording of thought and feeling for the sake of itself—will doubtless ever prevent us from forming that inner acquaintance with them that we have with the two races that I have mentioned. If we could have this, we might be compelled to modify in some important degree our total conception of ancient character, though no such fresh visions could interfere with the permanence of our vast mental and spiritual inheritance from Greeks and Romans.

It is to these two races alone that we apply the epithet “classical,” and by this adjective we aim to connote no merely ethno-

¹ The substance of this article formed the basis of the President's Address at the annual meeting of the American Philological Association held at Washington, D. C., in January, 1907. This fact may explain, if it does not excuse, the superficiality of treatment that appeared necessary in order to adapt the theme to oral presentation before a general audience.

logical and chronological marks, but certain deeper characteristics that may be, after all, not essentially connected with their ethnological and chronological and geographical interrelations. We think we observe in them a sufficient similarity in method of thought and expression to justify us in describing them by a common and unifying appellation. But when we endeavor to formulate with some precision a definition of the word "classical" that we so frequently call into service, we are at once involved in difficulties. We find ourselves floating in an imaginative realm, where everything is airy and elusive. It is doubtful whether any of us could agree on a sufficient definition; and if we should perchance be able to unite upon all the elements that we might consider essential to such a precise and complete definition, I seriously question whether we should any longer agree in including the two races under the common term "classical."

In general we are inclined to interpret "classical" not so much by a purely analytical process as by antithesis—by the contrasts that we can point out between "classical" traits and tendencies, and those prevailing of a later development, which have been often summed up under the widely inclusive term of "romantic." I very much doubt whether our terminology in this matter is happy—whether, indeed, our classification under it is not sure to be defective, in that what we call "classicism" is so fertile in the elements and suggestions that we call "romantic," and what we term "romanticism" is so permeated with strictly "classical" associations and echoes, that the rough and general division that has now become popular is neither scientifically accurate nor as subservient to a useful practical purpose as we may have deemed it. The passion for statistical classification with mathematical precision may easily be carried in things of the spirit to a point where obscuration of view results instead of clarity.

But it is not within my present purpose to carry the discussion farther in this direction. Let us see rather what some, if not all, of the essential elements are that we might all agree in including under the appellation "classical," and this without any immediate regard to a contrast between them and what some persons, by way of following the Germans of a century ago, may

call "romantic." If there is to be any antithesis, its function is to come in after that of analysis, and not in any wise to condition or modify it.

I take it that we are to consider these "classical" traits and tendencies as a part of the mental habit of the man—and, in some more or less vague and general way, of the race to which he belongs—which condition his mental machinery, and find expression in a marked degree in his political and social life, as well as in his art and literature—for surely one of these things is as much a form of racial expression as the other. And in shaping our definition from the observation of these two ancient peoples, we should certainly not dub as "classical" a trait or tendency that appears individual, or chiefly imitative, as the classical school in France appears to have been chiefly imitative, or the outcome of a conscious and wilful revolution, like that of the German school that I have mentioned. We search rather for such traits as may be called native, instinctive, and unconscious, and find a course of natural and unimpeded expression because they are in harmony with the environment in which they develop. These characteristics are of course sure to be in some true sense racial. It is the innovator and not the developer who finds himself out of harmony with his environment—kicking against the pricks.

In proceeding to run over briefly certain of these essential elements in the definition of the "classical," as it lies within the minds of most of us, I shall not need to elucidate my meaning by examples, especially before my present audience, and in view of my present theme.

The "classical" ideal of spirit appears to look toward a certain self-centredness and self-confidence, which is, however, not self-contained to the degree of finding its chief pleasure in the mental analysis of its own moods, or the elaboration of its own passions. It occupies the mental citadel rather as a vantage-ground where it may live the simple life, and whence it may survey the world outside. Yet it is not arrogantly self-assertive. Its disposition is not so much to enforce dominion over the souls of others as to claim dominion over its own soul. Its passions may be at times ebullient, but they are rather elemental than complicated. There

is a *naïveté* in them. They subside into as perfect a serenity of dignity and calm as the ocean after a storm.

In mode of expression this classical spirit is accordingly given to a definite clearness and directness of vision and of aim. This it must have above all things. It is thus greatly self-limited, but it resents limitation from without. It therefore cares little for ethics, since ethical distinctions are complicated and confining. It labors after perfection of form along its direct line of purpose, and its finished results are thus characterized by an ideality of beauty and a suggestion of reserve passion that is the triumph of art, but sometimes also of soullessness. They glitter, and entrance, and overpower the aesthetic consciousness more often than they enchain and lift the heart. There is an apparent simplicity of design, which is set off to perfection by a concealed subtlety in every part of the work. The intense study of things as they are leads in one direction to this idealism of formal beauty, and in the other to an end that is equally ideal, but so direct as to approach brutality. The concentration of mentality fosters a devotion to, and appreciation of, literature and art, in which the inner life finds its readiest and most complete expression. The cultivation of the self-restraint necessary to the carrying-out of a limited and undivided purpose tends toward what we call conservatism. The self-assurance engendered and sustained by the successful prosecution of a clearly perceived ideal results in a sort of disregard and contempt for outside influences and achievements, and a mental rebellion against enforced adaptation to new conditions, even though practiced cleverness in the bending of means to a desired end makes such adaptation possible.

“A mind at unity with itself”—that is the classical mind; not that it has necessarily already attained, or is already perfect, but it constantly pursues after its ideal state. A freshness and spontaneity of conception and of execution, but without exuberance, characterizes it, and this not in one sphere or span of life, but in life in general—a “severe economy,” someone has called it.

It is certainly possible to illustrate this sketch amply from ancient literature, art, philosophy, politics, and social life. It might also be greatly elaborated by the enlargement of its details,

and the addition of others. It is more than possible that many of you would phrase otherwise, and more perfectly, the items that I have thus set down. But I trust that most of you would come to agree that all of the traits and tendencies that I have thus stated in barest outline form a part of that general conception of what is "classical" that floats in our minds, and furthermore that I have have omitted few, at most, of its essential characteristics.

I think we should further agree that these classical traits are a distinct possession of the Greek race, or, at least, of that highest type of it which we call Athenian, in the best days of that type. I am not so sure that you will at once agree with me in what I am going on to say, but I trust at any rate that you will not think me guilty of uttering an empty paradox, when I assert that not one of these so-called "classical" traits is properly characteristic of the Romans. If the word "classical" have any more than the most formal geographical, and chronological, and purely linguistic significance, the Romans no more deserve to have the epithet "classical" flung at them than we do. They are in spirit and temper much more nearly allied to us Americans, their distant successors, than to the Greeks, their immediate predecessors and contemporaries in the history of civilization. Their closest kinship in language and in temper was apparently with the Kelts; and it was largely the circumstances of their peninsular isolation, and commercial and other political relations with the neighboring peninsula to the eastward, which was the most advanced region in literature and art, that made them the storehouse of so much that was Greek. They were essentially non-Greek, and non-classical.

Suppose we look for a moment at the traits that they show in various departments of life: and first of all in the political field, since in that direction is to be found our earliest knowledge concerning them. As is the case with all nations, the early history of the Romans is transfigured by the late mists of mingled tradition and sophistication into a mirage of marvel. We see men as trees walking—as demigods moving upon a stage of illusion. It is not yet determined—it probably never will be determined—where the mythical period ends, and that of trustworthy history begins. And for our immediate purpose this does not greatly

matter. For we are concerned with general characteristics rather than with precise origins. From later survivals of what we can clearly discern to be early institutions, and from the evident germ of traditions surrounded with accretions of romance, we can deduce sufficient material for safe inference.

The political history of Rome from its earliest to its latest days shows nothing of that individualistic type that distinguishes the "classical" life—that splendid isolation of feeling, that assertion of spiritual independence, that is at the foundation of what we call liberty. Liberty was more than once the rallying-cry of a small party of political idealists among the Romans, as it was among the enthusiasts of the eighteenth century, of the middle of the nineteenth—as it is among some sects of revolutionists today. But it was never a cry that held in it anything more than a temporary or factitious appeal. For the liberty to which a scholastic or a selfish adherence was thus pledged was a form of liberty impossible in any developed community life. Only Robinson Crusoe, before the advent of his Man Friday, could have rights that none could dispute. Liberty was never the characteristic watchword of the Romans, though it is a "classical" thing. Their watchword was rather "*res publica*," "my country!" That is distinctly unclassical, but it is distinctly Roman—and I venture to think it more noble than the "classical" cry.

As far back as we can trace the beginnings of Roman life into the darkness of the remote past, we find the citizen no individualist. He is already living in a well-organized community, in which the exercise of personal rights is rigorously subordinated to public opinion and to public jurisdiction. There is a supreme executive who exercises also, but not with untrammelled despotism, legislative and judicial functions. He is advised, and to some extent controlled, by a council of peers, who represent the leading families of the community, and perhaps all the original families of the community. We hear also of a popular assembly which has the right of decision of certain important matters that affect the interests of all the citizens, and without whose approval apparently not even the chief officer of state can enter upon his functions. The government of the community is one of checks and balances

as truly as our own is. So far is the authority of the head from being personal that his kingship, if, indeed, we may properly call it by that name, is not hereditary, may be held under especial circumstances by officers of temporary rather than of life tenure, and even may be exercised by two magistrates simultaneously, each clothed with the complete authority of the office; and this occasional duality in administration easily becomes the rule under what we are pleased to call the republic, which was re-established more firmly upon its ancient foundations after a period of more personal domination as the result of temporary conquest by Etruscan arms. Even the theoretically absolute authority of the *pater familias* is restrained and overruled by prescriptions of community law that date from the earliest times of which we can deduce any knowledge. And in the gravest matters of adjudication not thus assumed by the community as of right, the authority of the *pater familias* is exercised, only subject to the advice and consent of a council of some half-dozen of his fellow-citizens.

Contrary to the narrow intensity of the "classical" tendency, citizenship in the community is not jealously guarded. According to tradition, which doubtless in this respect also embodies some truth, the original nucleus of the citizen-body was of mongrel type, and the first great step forward in the increment of the state was made by the inclusion, on equal terms, of at least one irruptive settlement of different stock, though allied to that from which the majority of the original group sprang. There are also traces of equitable incorporation of yet other communal groups, as well as of individual families; and in certain cases migration to the growing city, and the acceptance of civic rights and privileges there in place of those held in their former seats, appears to have been enforced upon the chief inhabitants of conquered towns.

With increasing growth a sort of federation is looked to instead of local amalgamation to increase the strength of the community, and the ease of acquisition of full citizenship is in consequence limited. But the significant point is that no narrowness of political view that is characteristically "classical" is responsible for this apparent change of front—no mere pride of lofty isolation—but solely the practical difficulties of adjustment to the new con-

ditions of a problem that forces a look far into the future, and far beyond the narrow confines of Latium. How is Rome to secure a system of administration that shall be capable of indefinite extension of territorial area, and still preserve unity? A mere league between separated communities for purposes of offense and defense, and to secure amicable commercial and social relations, had proved temporarily useful, but not sufficient for the needs of empire. The mighty conception of a true nation that should yet be a federation of individually sovereign states, such as is familiar to us, was not to dawn upon the world for many centuries; for not even the Achaean League, despite Mr. Freeman's brilliant argument, appears to me to have justified itself as a nation. The solution for Rome appeared to be a wide extension among the outlying communities of a limited form of citizenship, combined with local self-government, which should supplant eventually the relations of an enforced or a voluntary league, and should in turn eventually be supplanted by the full suffrage. Thus at any particular time during the republic one may find within the borders of Italy communities representing a number of different stages in the evolution toward full integration with Rome, which it was the ultimate purpose of this masterly system to effect.

Meanwhile a new and exceedingly important question concerning burgess-rights had been in process of slow solution in the city itself. Since earliest times there had been resident within its borders a class of persons, freely admitted and welcomed, allowed to live and trade without restriction, in no wise treated as pariahs, or as certain truly "classical" communities treated strangers within their gates, but yet not citizens. So little was the "classical" aristocratic pride of civic inheritance regarded, that the enfranchised slave of a Roman citizen became himself a citizen by virtue of his manumission; but these plebeians, though in certain respects apparently treated as a constituent part of the community, and not even as social inferiors, were yet, in the eye of the constitution and of the laws, regarded when they had become a multitude as they had been regarded when they were but few, and of no great significance in the body politic. The progress of the movement toward their admission to complete burgess-rights

is familiar, and for my purpose it is unnecessary to rehearse it here. If we could only be more completely informed concerning its details, if we could only disentangle the true thread from the later tissue of colored tradition, we might satisfy ourselves whether indeed it is true, as the later narrative appears to represent, that the keen political sagacity of the Romans failed them in the earlier stages of this problem, so that they were unable to comprehend the necessity of provision for the perfect incorporation of the plebeians into the body of burgesses, until the plebeians had become so many that their immediate admission *en masse* to full burgess-rights appeared to threaten the stability of the government. We cannot solve, I think, this difficulty, nor can we easily free ourselves from the prejudices of the annalistic stories, which make each step in the progress a tale of raging strife between the two classes of patricians and plebeians, settled by a concession on the part of the dominant party that sometimes appears ludicrously inadequate to the noise of conflict. Yet, if we were at a sufficient distance to overlook the lively tales that make each point in the forward movement a point wrested from a blind and stubborn oligarchy by a united and determined democracy, we should take quite a different view of the affair. It would seem to be quite in accord with the wise principles of political administration that characterized the Romans in other directions. We should witness a moderate scheme of progressive emancipation carefully worked out from point to point, and leading to an ultimate goal that was reached by the middle of the third century before Christ—the total amalgamation of patrician and plebeian, and that with the minimum of danger or friction. The dramatic stories themselves have one curious thing about them, considering the rude centuries to which they are assigned—there is a surprisingly small amount of gore in them, and yet good red blood is a classic fluid. I think we must see, even in the apparent exception of the plebeian question, a trait of political character among the Romans that is non-“classical.”

And if we should choose to regard the whole political system and history of Rome as a system and history of concessions and compromises, we must surely regard it as “unclassical;” for the

truly classical spirit is too intense in the singleness of its ideal aim to deal patiently with concessions and compromises. It would rather break than bend.

Time would fail me to analyze in detail the political system and ideal of Rome, in order to point out the non-classical elements in it. But let me take one more point, the colonization and provincial policy of Rome.

The acutely centripetal consciousness of the truly classical community did not preclude it from colonization. But its colonial extensions were rather incidents than schemes. They did not form part of any imperial plan. The Greek colony was traditionally an independent offshoot from the mother-city. It was expected to shift for itself, as much as were those Samnite youths who marched out into the unknown as the product of a *uer sacrum*. Its ties of obligation to the homeland were of the loosest sort. This planetary child, thus flung off, might find its own orbit. But while the "classical" Greek thus looked inward, the Roman was ever looking outward. His aim was not individualism, but imperialism. His colony was merely a transplanted bit of the homeland, his province an outlying piece of Roman territory, governed and administered in its general interests, by officials sent from Rome, and deprived of all prospect of autonomy.

Our traditional view of the Romans is of a people distinctly conservative, and conservatism is distinctly a "classical" trait. These Romans doubtless were in some sense conservative, but their conservatism was a form and a framework rather than a living tissue. There never has been until our own day a nation so quick and ready in the adoption and adaptation of new blood and new ideas. Every century of their national existence saw new blood and new ideas grafted into the old community life, and even coming to overtop the old. Even the change from republic to empire, that appears to us in some aspects so portentous, was effected with hardly more than a jar of the complex political machinery. Personal issues there were, wearing the guise of political principles, and these were fiercely and bloodily contested; but these contests affected only the surface of the deep current of national life, the steady course of which was constantly onward.

No narrow pride of race had been responsible for restraining the plebeians so long in the early centuries of Rome from the enjoyment of equal political rights with the other members of the already mixed community. No such later pride, "classical" though it would have been, debarred the nation from admitting to its citizenship, its service, and its highest rewards, men of provincial birth and lineage. No haughty spirit of self-sufficiency stood in the way of the adoption by Rome of whatever she considered good, wherever she found it. Classicism is national; Rome was cosmopolitan and catholic. When she came in contact with the alien, but more advanced, civilization of Etruria, she greedily adopted from her ancient foe much that contributed to the enrichment of her own life, but not altogether to its true enlightenment. When she found that the Semitic Carthage could teach her farmers a more scientific type of agriculture, she had Mago's great work translated into her own tongue. The extension of her politics and her commerce brought to her knowledge the beauty and the splendor of the truly classical inheritance of Greece, and though she disliked and detested the Greek character, even her stubborn Cato learned in his old age to speak Greek.

We may justly condemn, from our more enlightened aesthetic and ethical standpoint, the lamentably rude and violent methods by which the appropriation to Roman life of the artistic riches of Greece was sometimes carried out. They are quite comparable with the more recent artistic activities of the great Napoleon, which convinced the hereditarily facetious descendants of the ancient despoilers that Frenchmen were thieves and robbers, *non tutti*, to be sure, *ma buona parte*. We may properly smile at the naïve form of marine insurance effected by the Roman conqueror of Corinth in the interest of his valuable cargoes. We may deplore, from the severely "classical" standpoint, the overpowering influence upon the germs of a possible Italian literature and art at a relatively early period effected by this exuberant inpouring of foreign masterpieces. I, however, for one, am inclined to think it the most providential thing that could be conceived for the history of Roman civilization and of the civilization of the world. I am not now concerned, however, with the appraisal of the character or

extent of this Greek influence upon Roman life, nor with the attempt to conceive what might have been, had its conquering inroads not taken place, or had they been postponed to a later period. I might, indeed, argue, as you well know, that there is much more of a distinctly Italian character to Roman literature and Roman art after the Grecian conquest than was readily acknowledged a generation ago. But this, too, is beside my purpose. My only point here is that the Romans displayed an entirely "unclassical," but remarkably broad and cosmopolitan trait, in their quick and eager understanding of the things that were excellent and of good report in the achievements of an alien and a conquered race. Even the untutored Mummius knew that he had won in the capture of Corinth things more precious than mere silver and gold. Customs have changed with the change of years, and no longer may even the loot from a captured Mongolian city be displayed openly without the hearing of a cry of "shame." But wealth is in itself no less unaesthetic than strength, and the acquisition of European art-treasures by the purses of American millionaires is as significant of our eager longing for, and appreciation of, the things we cannot make, as would be any conquest of them by our bow and by our spear. Indeed, I feel reasonably confident that Mummius—and possibly Verres—would applaud us as after all kindred spirits, could they see proudly exhibited in our museums precious antiquities surreptitiously and illegally exported from the countries of their discovery. Yet I doubt whether even Mummius and Verres would be able to comprehend, without long and patient tutelage at the hands of these millionaires of ours, the economic advantage of "encouraging home industry" by imposing a heavy tax upon the importation of works of intellect and genius, when they happen to be of recent achievement. But that is another story.

I have already remarked that the truly "classical" spirit may eagerly range over many of the vast reaches of philosophic speculation, finding therein the fullest enjoyment of its individual power and freedom. But it is likely to find small delight in the study of ethics; for ethics concerns the moral limitation of individual freedom. Human conduct is likely in that realm to find itself

hemmed in by boundary walls and confronted by categorical imperatives. The Romans developed no school of philosophy. They went to study under the great teachers of Greece, as we have gone to German universities. But their keenest philosophical interest was decidedly "unclassical," in lying, as that of many of us lies, in the direction of practical ethics. The Roman had no difficulty in understanding the "unclassical" proposition that the individual existed, not for himself, but, in some true sense, for the community, instead of the community for the individual. That was bred in his bone and in his flesh. The community was first, the individual second. Hence came that remarkable genius of the Roman mind for law, a phenomenon that appears more remarkable the more closely it is studied. It is distinctly "unclassical," this magnificent structure of complex jurisprudence, grand enough to command the world, and stable enough on its solid foundations of morality and reason to outlast not merely dynasties, but nations, and to furnish the basis for the legislation of communities undreamed of even when Justinian sat upon his throne. And this was possible because Rome, from its rude beginnings upon the scant Seven Hills, had the "unclassical" sense, however inarticulate at first, of a true community life based upon eternal sanctions as all-embracing and as permanent as the world itself.

It is not possible to take time to point out fully in the matter of legal conceptions and development the wide difference between the individualistic tendencies of the traditional Greek mind and the broad humanistic sentiment of Rome. But let us take a single instance. Slavery is an institution so old in human history that the Greek philosophers accepted it as a natural institution. It was natural to the "classical" individualism of the Greek world, for that tendency led men to recognize privilege as a basic distinction in human society. Even the idealistic Plato, with all his communal tendencies, failed to rise above the conception of a state founded upon perpetual caste distinctions. In his *Laws* he recognizes, to be sure, some of the inconveniences and burdens to the commune of freemen that arise from the existence of slavery within it, but of the natural right of the slave to freedom, of

the hope of ultimate universal emancipation, he knows nothing. Aristotle was well aware that some scattered voices had been raised to proclaim that the slave had been made such by force, and so against nature; but he asserted that human society rests upon three supports, man, woman, and slave. Take away any one of these, and the whole structure falls clattering to the ground. "Slavery exists," he says in his *Politics* (1. 2), "as the natural counterpart of freedom. For by nature one man is destined to be master, and another to be slave." And again in his *Ethics* (8. 13), "The slave is but an implement endowed with life; an implement is but a lifeless slave." This, I repeat, is but the logical expression of "classical" individualism. But turn to the utterances of Roman thinkers, and note the difference. And first hear a philosopher (Sen. *Ep.* 47. 1): "'They are slaves.' 'Nay, rather, men.' 'They are slaves.' 'Nay, but comrades.' 'They are slaves.' 'Nay, humble friends.' 'They are slaves.' 'Nay, call them rather your fellow-slaves, when you consider that fortune has the same power over both!'" The jurists, too, speak to the same purport, with less of rhetoric, to be sure, but with more clearness of precise definition. They properly characterize slavery as existing *iure gentium*, for by this they mean merely that it is early in origin and universal in practice. But Florentinus says (*Dig.* 1. 5. 4), "Slavery is a constitution *iuris gentium*, by which one person is subjected to ownership by another contrary to nature." And the great Ulpian declares (*Dig.* 50. 17. 32), "By the civil law slaves are not treated as men: not so, however, by the law of nature, for in the eye of the law of nature all men are equal." What better could William Lloyd Garrison have said?

Nor was the difference between Greek and Roman on this point merely a matter of theory, or confined in the case of the latter race merely to the theoretic opinions of a few late writers. It permeated the legal and social relations of master and slave from the earliest times. We must not, to be sure, think of the condition of the slave as always one of suffering. Outbreaking crimes, rather than commonplace virtues, have always formed the staple of popular gossip; and precisely as the lurid pages of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* afford no true general picture of slavery in our

own southern states, so the scattered notices of ancient brutality and savagery of masters toward slaves are no fair indication of the conditions generally surrounding slavery in Greece and Rome. But in Greece the slave had almost no claim upon legal protection, and no prospect of becoming a burgess. I am glad to be able to chronicle one striking exception, even though it interferes with the universality of my thesis. At Athens, one of whose glories it is to have taught the other communities the recognition of suppliant rights, the slave might, at one time, claim the protection of the law against excessive abuse at the hands of his master. This was a remarkable exception to the prevalent Greek tendency. But at Rome, from the earliest days, the tendency was otherwise than in Greece. Roman law, like Roman character, shows at many points a curious inconsistency of verbal and formal hardness and conservatism along with practical and sympathetic breadth and appreciation. The Romans held theoretically to a stiff, not to say rigid, ideal of the *dominica potestas*, as they did of the *patria potestas*; but in practice, and in legislation, both *patria* and *dominica potestas* fell far short of the attributes of true ownership. The tendency was to look upon the slave as a man, and a possible fellow-citizen. How early legislation began to throw around the slave the mantle of her protection we cannot tell; for the familiar enactments of the late republic and early empire appear to sanction and repeat some principles already recognized. I need not remind you of their generous details, nor need I do more than remind you that, so far as political rights were concerned, from the earliest times a manumitted slave of a Roman citizen became the political equal of his master, a state of things abhorrent to the "classical" ideal of Greece. Of the wisdom of this immediate and full enfranchisement I shall not argue. If it were unwise, it is even the more to the advantage of my thesis, as showing the modern rather than the "classical" feeling of principle on the part of the Roman community. As a matter of fact, there were evils, grave evils, consequent upon it. The difficulties involved appear to resemble closely those precipitated upon our own southern states by the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution. In the late years of Augustus, and the earlier part

of the principate of Tiberius (by the *Leges Iulia* and *Iunia-Norbona*), an attempt at certain limitations was made; but popular sentiment was evidently too strong for reactionary legislation, and the new acts quickly fell into abeyance. Nor, in the interests of true liberty, need we mourn, as some of our parrot-like historians have been prone to do, that in the late Republic, and under the Empire, freedmen proved their ability to stand beside, and even above, their former masters in all the vocations of life.

I am far from claiming that this lack of sectional and local jealousy, this ready welcome of new ideas, of foreign elements of culture, of unlimited immigration and amalgamation, with all the change of social conditions that they brought in their train, was an ideal system of life and thought for the moral growth of the great Roman city and Roman empire. That is a subject that has interested, and may well interest, the student of political and social science; it may well interest us, who may recognize the ancient prototype of conditions that confront us also, and us, perhaps, more than any other nation since those ancient times. But the discussion of it is apart from my present purpose, which is to point out merely what a wide difference there is between the social exclusiveness of the "classical" ideal, and this enormous inclusiveness of Rome, and how closely the latter resembles our own modern spirit.

Let me carry the discussion just one step further on, that I may speak of the attitude of Rome regarding religion; and on this point I will try to be brief.

The self-centered character of the truly "classical" community leads us to expect—what history shows us to be the case—the predominance of local cults, with the exaltation of the private god above all others. Conjoined with this is the tendency to view unorthodoxy in worship with more or less of suspicion and dislike, and to condemn the innovator, not, perhaps, so much on account of any injury to the majesty of a slighted deity, as because of a perturbation of the staid habits of the community. Athens had her Athene, beside the glory of whose adoration the cult of other divinities seems to the ordinary observer a pale and adventitious thing. But who was the distinctive local god of Rome? Ianus?

Mauors? Pales? Faunus? Vortumnus? Where was his pre-eminent shrine? Through all the history of Rome, from her early days, any and all gods found a welcome within her walls, until the sects there worshiping in common peace and quietness were somewhat comparable in number and diversity to those variegated and wonderfully named bodies of godly folk that our own country shelters in her ample bosom. Rarely, indeed, was there any interference with religious freedom in Rome. When there was any public action that could in any sense be so denominated, it was due to some cause not connected with religious jealousy or exclusiveness. The rites of the Bacchanals were at one time sternly interdicted, but because their association was made a cover for murder and lust. Action was taken more than once against the Egyptian deities, but for similar reasons. Christians suffered at various times, but not truly because of their religion as such. It was their secrecy concerning their most sacred rites, and their puritanic exclusiveness, that at times roused against them popular ill-will, and exposed them to charges of crime and immorality in their private meetings. Moreover, they refused to dissolve their associations, and intermit their assemblies, when the civil law commanded the disbanding of all *ἐταπρίαί* as suspected centers of treasonable practices; and the faithful among them created a more grave distrust of the civic loyalty of the Christian cult by their stubborn refusal to purge themselves of suspicion by the simple act of dropping a few grains of incense on the altar-fire burning before the emperor's statue. This persistency was incomprehensible to the state officials on any other theory than that the Christians acknowledged an allegiance centered elsewhere than in the Roman emperor; and an *imperium in imperio* was dangerous and intolerable. Only on such accounts as these, and not because of any religious intolerance, such as the "classical" temper might engender, were the Christians subjected to persecution. The Romans held, it is needless to say, quite different views from ours on the nature of religion, and on the obligations arising under it, and their religious toleration was based, therefore, on other principles than those upon which, I judge, most of us would base our own; but the practice of religion was as untrammelled in Rome,

except for such cases as I have instanced, as it is in these United States.

I have thus sketched, in rude outline, certain of the characteristic traits of that ancient civilization from which so much of later civilization has sprung; and I have done it with the purpose of pointing out what I conceived has perhaps not been sufficiently emphasized before, the essentially "unclassical," but essentially modern, aspect of these traits. I am aware that these matters deserve more critical handling, for which the space at my disposal does not suffice. One topic especially might call for separate treatment—the marvelous steadiness of the growth in true democratic liberty, even when popular assemblies for legislative purposes had vanished, and the prince had become a master instead of a magistrate; the wonderful development of a system of civic order and justice at a time when the average person thinks of the Roman empire as crumbling into a mad chaos of political, social, and moral disintegration.

I may not call the people of these United States a race, though I may call them that which is far more significant and noble, a nation. This nation can claim no organic descent from the Romans of that far-off day, but in a true and enduring sense we feel them bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. They live and breathe among us and in us, not merely because of that vast material and spiritual inheritance that we, in common with other countries, have derived from them, but by virtue of a temperamental kinship that stretches across these subjective bounds of space and time, and transcends the futile bars of race and language. Nor do I need to conclude my apologue with *haec fabula docet*, in order to round out the consciousness of both the inspirations and the warnings that this nation may find in the history of that ancient, but "unclassical," people so inly akin to us.

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